

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

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EUR/IB - MR. SMITH

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, ZA, PO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH MARK CHONA

1. AT HIS OWN REQUEST GRZ PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR MARK CHONA VISITED THE DEPARTMENT AUGUST 3 TO MEET WITH AF/E DIRECTOR COOTE. IN ONE AND ONE-HALF HOUR MEETING CHONA: (A) EXPRESSED PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL PLEASURE AT SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION OF RECENT PROGRAM LOAN; (B) INDICATED HIS PERSONAL GUARDED OPTIMISM THAT CAETANO REFORMS AND INCLUSION AFRICAN MEMBERS IN LOCAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES WERE SMALL AND VERY TENTATIVE SIGNS THAT PROGRESS WAS POSSIBLE IN PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES; (C) SAID THAT GRZ WAS VERY PLEASED AT AMOUNT OF CARGO MOVING THROUGH LOBITO TO AND FROM ZAMBIA; AND (D) VIGOROUSLY DEFENDED GRZ'S OFFICIAL VERSION OF MAY 15 SHOOTING AT VICTORIA FALLS. (MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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POSITIVE ASPECT OF DISCUSSION OF VICTORIA FALLS INCIDENT

WAS CHONA'S COMMENT THAT HE BELIEVED GRZ WOULD LIKELY BE WILLING MAKE SOME SORT OF SETTLEMENT TO CROTHERS IN LIGHT OF ITS AGREEMENT TO DO SO FOR CANADIAN FAMILIES OF DECEASED GIRLS.)

2. IN DISCUSSION OF VICTORIA FALLS INCIDENT WHICH TOOK UP MOST OF MEETING CHONA EMOTIONALLY AND VIGOROUSLY TOOK PAINS TO POINT UP FLAWS (AS GRZ SEES THEM) IN CROTHERS

ACCOUNT OF SHOOTING. HE STATED THAT ZAMBIANS FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT WITH EQUANIMITY EXTREMELY ADVERSE PRESS PLAY (PRIMARILY IN CANADA) GIVEN MAY 15 INCIDENT WHEN ZAMBIA ITSELF HAD SUFFERED TWENTY DEATHS SINCE BEGINNING 1973 DUE TO LAND MINE EXPLOSIONS, RHODESIAN CROSS BORDER FIRING, ETC. COOTE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE REGRETTING UNFAVORABLE CONSEQUENCES IN ZAMBIA OF ZAMBIAN/RHODESIAN TENSIONS, USG COULD NOT REGARD THIS AS EXCUSE FOR SHOOTING AT INNOCENT TOURISTS. CROTHERS AND FAMILIES OF CANADIAN GIRLS WHO WERE KILLED UNDERSTANDABLY ALSO FEEL VERY STRONGLY ON THIS POINT. CHONA HOWEVER SIMPLY REVERTED TO FACT THAT THERE LITTLE OR NO PRESS OUTCRIES AT DEATHS OF 20 ZAMBIANS. IT SEEMED QUITE CLEAR FROM DISCUSSION THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO RECONCILE DIVERGENT VIEWS EXPRESSED IN GRZ COMMUNIQUE ON SHOOTING AND AFFIDAVITS MADE BY CROTHERS.

3. COOTE SUGGESTED THAT IN ORDER AVOID POSSIBILITY OF VICTORIA FALLS INCIDENT BECOMING SERIOUS ISSUE BETWEEN USG AND GRZ, GRZ CONSIDER EX GRATIA SETTLEMENT OFFER TO CROTHERS. IF SUCH OFFER WERE TO BE MADE THERE SEEMED REASONABLE POSSIBILITY THAT CROTHERS, DESPITE STRONG DISAGREEMENT WITH GRZ ON FACTS OF INCIDENT, WOULD BE WILLING LET ISSUE DIE, WHICH APPEARED DESIRABLE SOLUTION FOR ALL SIDES. CHONA REPLIED THAT ZAMBIANS TOO WISHED TO SEE END OF THIS INCIDENT AND INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT GRZ, DESPITE STRONG FEELING ENGENDERED BY CROTHERS STATEMENTS IN RHODESIA, WOULD BE WILLING CONSIDER SUCH SETTLEMENT. ROGERS

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